

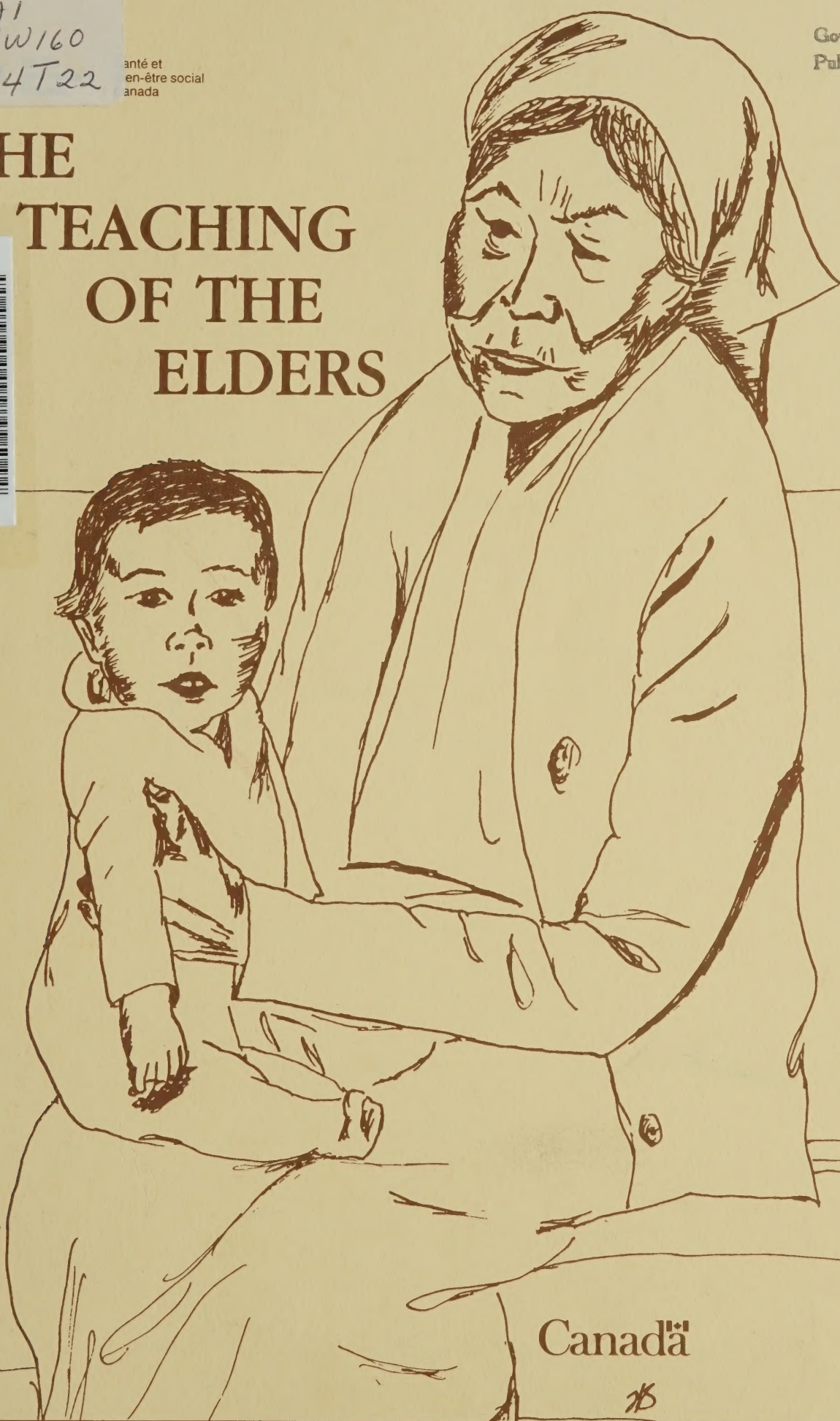
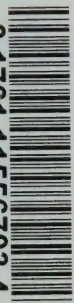
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# THE TEACHING OF THE ELDERS

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# THE TEACHING OF THE ELDERS

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## THE TEACHING OF THE ELDERS

AS TOLD TO THE MALASPINA COLLEGE NATIVE FAMILY SUPPORT INFANT EDUCATION PROGRAM BY NORAH GEORGE.

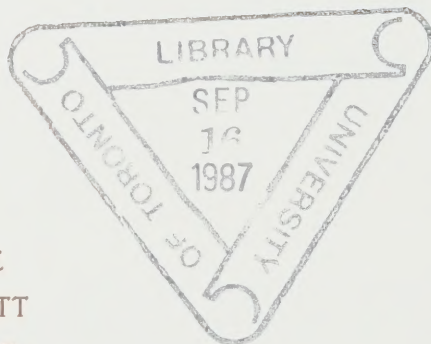
THE NATIVE FAMILY SUPPORT INFANT EDUCATION AND CARE STUDENTS WOULD LIKE TO THANK NORAH GEORGE FOR ALL HER KINDNESS IN GIVING OF HER TIME TO PASS ON THE TEACHING OF THE "OLD WAYS" OF THE SALISH PEOPLE.

THANK YOU ALSO TO OUR GUEST SPEAKERS WHO SHARED THEIR KNOWLEDGE WITH US:

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THEY WERE SUPPORTED BY THEIR BANDS: COWICHAN, CHEMAINUS, HALALT, PENELAKUT AND MALAHAT.

INSTRUCTOR: GAYLE DAVIES

## INTRODUCTION

The Elders of our community are the teachers of our traditional culture. With their knowledge and experience it enables our younger children to learn more about our Indian Culture.

Their teachings with our children are so important because children will grow to love and respect and obey their parents.

Since we had no written language all the teachings of the Elders were passed on orally. There was no formal schooling as we know it today but the Elders would talk to the children and tell them of their life experiences.

Our Elders has almost total recall of incidents, names and place. We should regard their teachings seriously since they care enough to pass on their knowledge.



**"LIFE IS STRICT, BUT IF YOU FOLLOW TEACHINGS,  
YOU WILL HAVE A BETTER AND LONGER LIFE"**

**Norah George**

**PRECONCEPTION**

The Elders believe that a woman should be of good physical and mental health before she conceives. She should give up bad habits which could harm the pre-natal development of the child, such as smoking, drinking, poor eating habits, worry, anger and fear. A man should also try to achieve these goals and offer his support to his wife to make her pregnancy easier and more enjoyable.

**PREGNANCY**

Once a woman becomes pregnant she has a responsibility to her unborn child to conduct her life so as her baby will be born strong and healthy. Because the Elders believe the way a woman lives, the food she eats, the sights she sees, the moods she feels and her attitudes directly affect her baby, they have a rigid set of rules which a woman should follow.

**LIFESTYLE**

A woman has to accept that by becoming pregnant she is no longer considered a child and has to act as an adult, thinking of the child that she will bring into the world. As part of becoming an adult, she has to learn to control her actions and her moods, knowing that if she chooses to be angry, sulking, complaining, crying and sad throughout her pregnancy, then her baby will be born with the same disposition.

During pregnancy a mother should remain active, fulfilling her normal daily chores. This is important to her delivery, because if she changes position often, her afterbirth will come away easily. She should realize that pregnancy is a normal healthy state and she should not feel sorry or pamper herself to the extent that she becomes depressed or lazy and is unable to properly care for her baby when it arrives.

The husband plays an important role throughout the pregnancy. He also has to accept that he is no longer a child and will soon become a father. As a father he must realize, that by being head of the family, his child will look to him for guidance, so he should be a good example for the child to follow. He should be preparing himself for the role of a teacher, because he will be expected to pass on to his child the teachings he learned as a child. In addition he has to look after his wife's physical and emotional needs by creating a comfortable and worry-free environment.

To ensure a normal pregnancy and delivery a pregnant woman is taught many things. She is taught she should never hesitate on the threshold of a home or room. She should decide on her purpose beforehand and carry through with what she is doing or where she is going. It is believed that hesitating in a doorway or with an action causes false labour near time of delivery. These sessions of false labour are thought to be the baby's hesitation at crossing over the threshold of being born.

(2)

If a mother sees something ugly or unpleasant, she should spit. If she sees something pretty or pleasant, she should swallow. The elders believe that the baby's and mother's senses are one and the same, therefore when mother swallows, she supplies her baby's senses with the same external experiences.

A pregnant mother should not touch animals. Again because the mother supplies her baby with external experiences through her senses, it is believed that if a mother touches an animal, her baby will develop the same physical animal characteristics. If a pregnant woman watches an animal give birth, this could cause her to have a multiple birth.

## **FOODS**

The Elders believe that when pregnant, a woman should eat properly, but there are many foods she should not eat because of the effect they will have on the child and the difficulties they may cause giving birth.

### **Crabs**

Because the baby will foam at the mouth and when the baby begins to walk, he will walk sideways or be bow-legged. Eating soft crabs will cause the baby to have soft bones.

### **Ling Cod**

Could cause baby to have a heart murmur, a birth mark on face or have a black mark on eye. Other types of fish are alright to eat except for the fins and the tail. The fins may cause the baby to lift his elbows when delivering and the tail could cause a breech birth (feet first).

### **Octopus**

Skin, suckers, or end of the legs. The skin because the baby's skin will sag, the suckers because they attach to the back, causing hard labour and the end of legs because they are believed to swim in the stomach causing a disease.

### **Berries**

Because it is thought that the baby will be born with a red or dark birth mark. Liver has the same effect.

When you have a child, you have to assume the responsibilities of having a child. If you love your children, you will teach them well. Then they will be proud and you will be proud of them. When you have a child you have to start thinking of the ways you are going to teach your children. Mother and Father both should be involved. They both have to have authority and make their children listen.



## WHAT THE ELDERS USED TO SAY



When you are pregnant, you do not lay around too much on your back.

## THE OLD TEACHING

When first pregnant move around, change positions when lying down so that the birth will go well, and the afterbirth will come away without trouble.



## THE OLD WAYS

If you talk to your baby from the very start, this way you will not be a stranger to your baby and he has a sense of belonging. You will always be in touch with each other and never grow apart as the child gets older. Talking to your baby also helps him to grow and develop. Communication is a good tool for healthier growing and learning.



## THE OLD WAYS

Moms, bring baby to your cooking so he can smell the food. Baby has the sense to know that you are going to sit down for meals soon.

Baby will not cry while you are eating. The reason for doing this is the baby is set at ease and is well relaxed and sleeping peacefully.



## THE OLD WAYS

Don't favor one child, love them equally. Teach them how to love, respect and value each other as individual persons.

Once respect is taught to a child or children it paves the way for easier understanding and communication, which leads to a healthier relationship between the families.



MOTHER LOVE IS EQUAL LOVE

## WHAT THE ELDERS USED TO SAY



Pass on what you know to your child if you love your child.



## WHAT THE OLD PEOPLE USED TO SAY



In raising children both Mom and Dad have to take responsibility. Otherwise it will be too big a burden if there is just one doing all the work.



Take your children with you where you go. Don't be ashamed of your children.

Let your children know that they are yours.



## THE OLD TEACHING

Tell your children the **Right** things because you **Love** them and not for any other reason.

Don't praise too much because the person may become too proud and not try anymore.

## PASS ON YOUR TEACHING

That in Indian ways, it is important for family to teach their child right from wrong.

Even though they are young, they can understand what we're stressing.

A child has to be able to share amongst families.

This way he is learning not to be greedy, and respects others.

## THE OLD WAYS

Don't get mad when people say things to you. Learn to be patient - you will be able to learn more.

When you are young you may not remember, but as you get older, the things that you learn will come out again.

## THE TEACHING OF ELDERS



The boys are taught not to make fun of girls. They are taught this when they are very young, because they are born from a woman.

If they make fun of girls, they are making fun of their own mother.



## TEACHING OF THE ELDER



Talk to your children while they are eating. Then what you say will stay in them, even after you are gone.

## THINGS THE ELDERS SAY

Children should be made to do their own chores, e.g., dishes, sweeping floors, making their own bed, and chopping wood.

## THE TEACHING

Teach the children the crafts.

Don't worry that they are too small. Make them do it properly. Have them do it over and over until they have done it properly.



## THE OLD WAYS

When a man bathes he should be up at 4:00 a.m., and bathe before the sun is up and not rest again until the sun sets. Remember the time and he should be awake and getting up himself or otherwise he will always be expecting someone to wake him and won't be alert.

A man has to bathe for four mornings after his baby is born. He has to sleep on the floor and learn to be alert. You train your whole body to be alert for the child.

If you sleep in too comfortable position, you won't be alert to your child. It would be like the child is not even yours.

## THE TEACHING

Splash the water four times. Rub the water on your chest and arms, four times.

Don't just jump in. Think of what will happen to your body. You don't know what is in the water.

Walk in the water slowly. Rub the cedar boughs on your arms. Not the sharp side.

When the boys first go hunting, they also have to bathe. If they don't, the deer will smell them and go away and they won't be able to get or catch anything.



## THE OLD WAYS

Boys weren't allowed to eat large amounts - they had to stay thin so they would be fast runners.

Feed a certain type of fish that would give the boys a long wind.

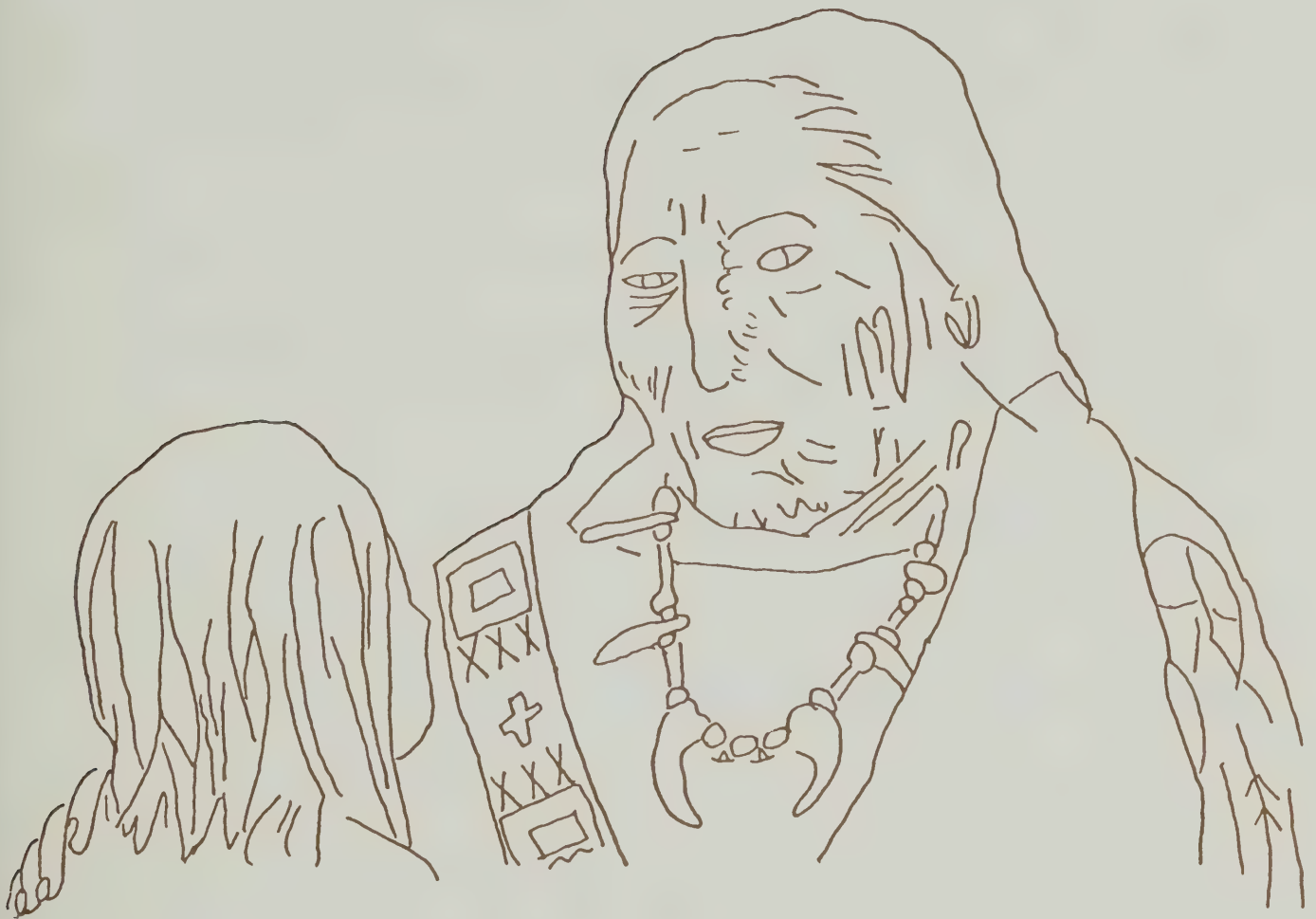
Men are responsible for the boys, teach them. Include them in everything you do and explain to them how to do things such as:

Fishing

Hunting

Building a Canoe

## THE OLD TEACHING



Children should learn to respect their elders. Children who listen, learn to know what they want in life, when they are adults. They become richer faster than the ones who don't listen.

But children who don't listen feel sorry for themselves, and become lazy.

## THE OLD TEACHING

Tell your children to be, help them to be - proud of the fact that they are Indian.

If you don't tell your children who and what they are, they won't know.

How can they be proud of what they don't know?

Tell them, when in a crowd, behave, don't run around. They should know what is expected of them and should not have the parents angry with them.

The child should never boss the parents.

Shouldn't allow the child to handle money. The money is evil. They will have to handle it when they are older and then they will be stronger.



### **THE OLD WAYS**

If a child doesn't want to listen to his Guardian (who isn't his mom or dad), tries to make it hard on them, then the Guardian will have to continually talk to the child and set things right with the child. Tell him he can't get away with things.

### **PASS ON YOUR TEACHING**

If children learn the values of money, they know money doesn't grow on trees. Let them earn it by doing chores, i.e., housework, dishes, etc. Then they won't want everything they see, but learn to spend money wisely.

Our Elders say money is evil, and leads children to wanting more luxuries by stealing. It is hard for parents, but they have to be very consistent by teaching over and over.

We may think that our parents are mean, but they are helping us out to leading a good life which is very important to us.

### **THE OLD WAYS**

Child should stand close to grandparents, so they will hear everything they say, and the grandparents won't have to yell or talk loud at the children.

## THE OLD WAYS

Respect the Elders, Auntie, Uncle, Grandparents. Do not ever just pass them.

Always greet them, never laugh or play around the Elders.

If you listen and obey to the Elders then you become well respected by them as well as other people. Not very many of our young people will listen to an Elder, they just tell them they're not boss. But they were only getting told for their own benefit, they will find out later in life because they didn't listen. Then they'll be asking and saying, I should have listened when I was told. If you listen to an Elder then you learn not only how to do it but respect as well.

When someone tells you to do something it is because they care for you. Then you start to hear, I told you because I LOVE you and care for you. It's true, if they didn't love you and care for you they wouldn't waste their time or breath talking to you.

## THE OLD TEACHING

Learn how to talk, then learn how to teach. Teach your children they will be proud and you will be proud.

Love your child, teach them well.

When you have a child don't think that you are still young. You have to start thinking how you are going to teach them.

Don't repeat what you see or hear (don't gossip). If you're going to repeat what you see maybe you will cause a couple to separate because of things you are saying.

Keep it to yourself.



## TEACHING OF THE ELDERS

In the olden days the Elders used to tell people, never allow your children outside when they are eating or to have food crumbs around their mouths.

Still today people are told this. The reason why they wouldn't allow this is because something would happen to your child and your child would get bothered by the dead.

Sometimes being bothered by the dead it would mean that this person or persons are hungry.

Then your parents would have to burn food for the person or persons that are hungry.



## **THE TEACHING**

Open up to your husband and then he will open up. If you don't talk you will find you're living with a stranger.

The Old People said: "Get it out of your heart, don't leave it there, you might do something you don't want to do".

## **OLD WAYS**

If you listen when you are young and learn the teachings, when you get older and have a job you will know what to do.

You will have the power to look around and study what there is to do and know, and then you will do well in your job.

**YOU'RE ALERT.**

## THE OLD TEACHING

The boys when they're younger, the teaching is when you see the girls you look at the face and not just the body.

They were told to respect the girl.

Also when you are going to get married, you already have a woman and don't go looking around for another woman.

Don't hide what is in your heart that's bothering you.

Talk it out with a friend, brother, family.

When you unburden your heart you feel better, and are able to talk about it openly.



## THE OLD WAYS

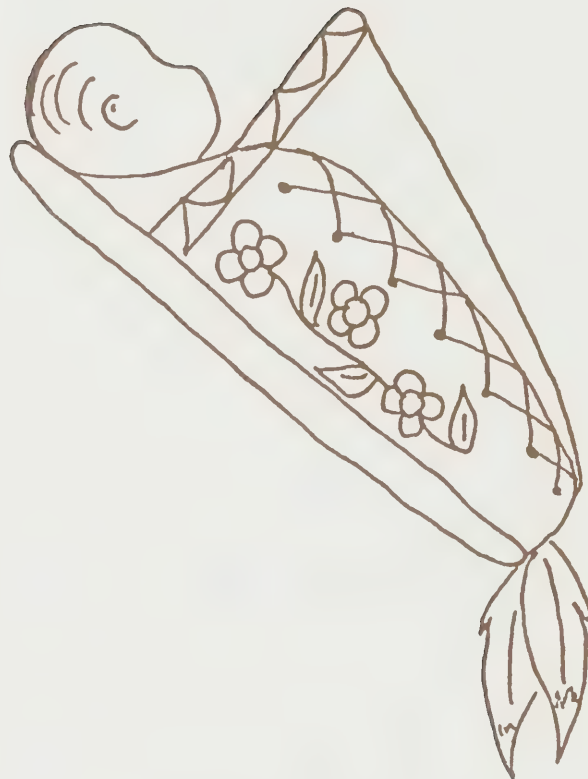


When breast-feeding baby, never let your chest get cold, always keep it warm especially at night time.

Wrap it up in a blanket if you are going out, even during the summertime dress warmly.

Keeping the back warm during this time is very important for later life.

## OLD WAYS



### PATHUS-CRADLE BOARD

When you make a pathus, make it of cedar. Make the board the way you want your child to grow. If you want your child to be thin, make the board thin. If the board is short and thin then the child will be short and thin. After the baby has grown out of cradle board, treasure it because your child has used it.

## THE TEACHING

Curious - When you are young you can't be curious about what the Elders are talking about, they will tell you to keep quiet and to go out.

You have to be patient and wait to learn about what you were curious to ask.

## THE OLD WAY

When a husband is out, there are young girls that will come and flirt with him. The husband has to remember that his wife is at home, he has to remember his wife.

It seems that to some young girls, it's a game they feel happy when they make someone suffer.

The girls are taught the same thing.

## THE OLD WAYS

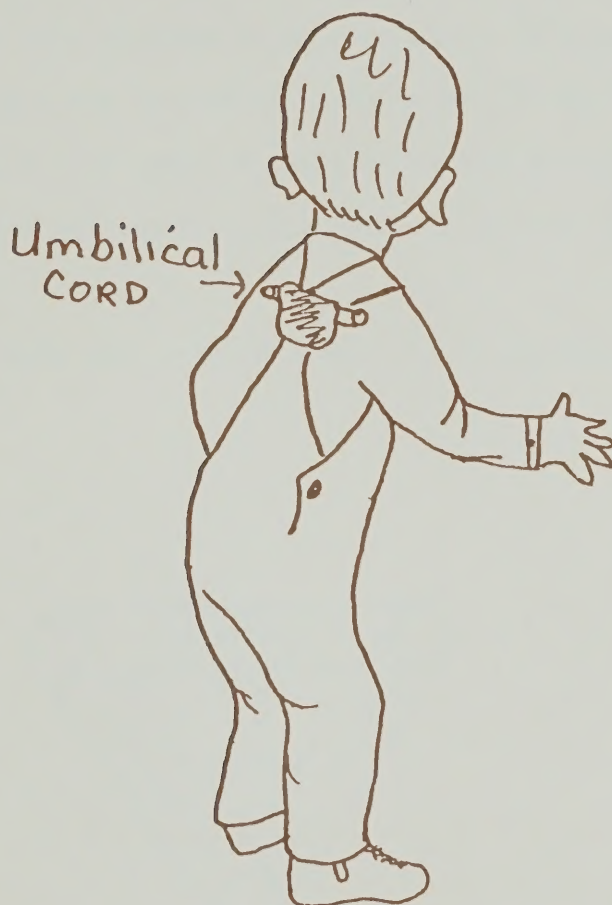
Tell your sons that when they marry, their wife will be like their mother and they will let them know what is expected of them.

Also when they marry they have to obey their wife because they are the ones taking their mother's place.

When you're pregnant - and fixing ducks and you put it in the fire to burn the feathers off and the stomach breaks - don't ever touch that because that's how your baby will be when he cries: his stomach will burst.



## THE OLD WAYS



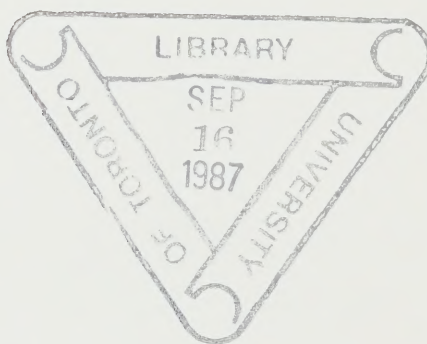
## UMBILICAL CORD OF THE NEWBORN

When the cord falls off the newborn, save it and wrap it up. When the child starts to walk, pin the cord on his back, so that the child will not dig around, or always be in search of something.

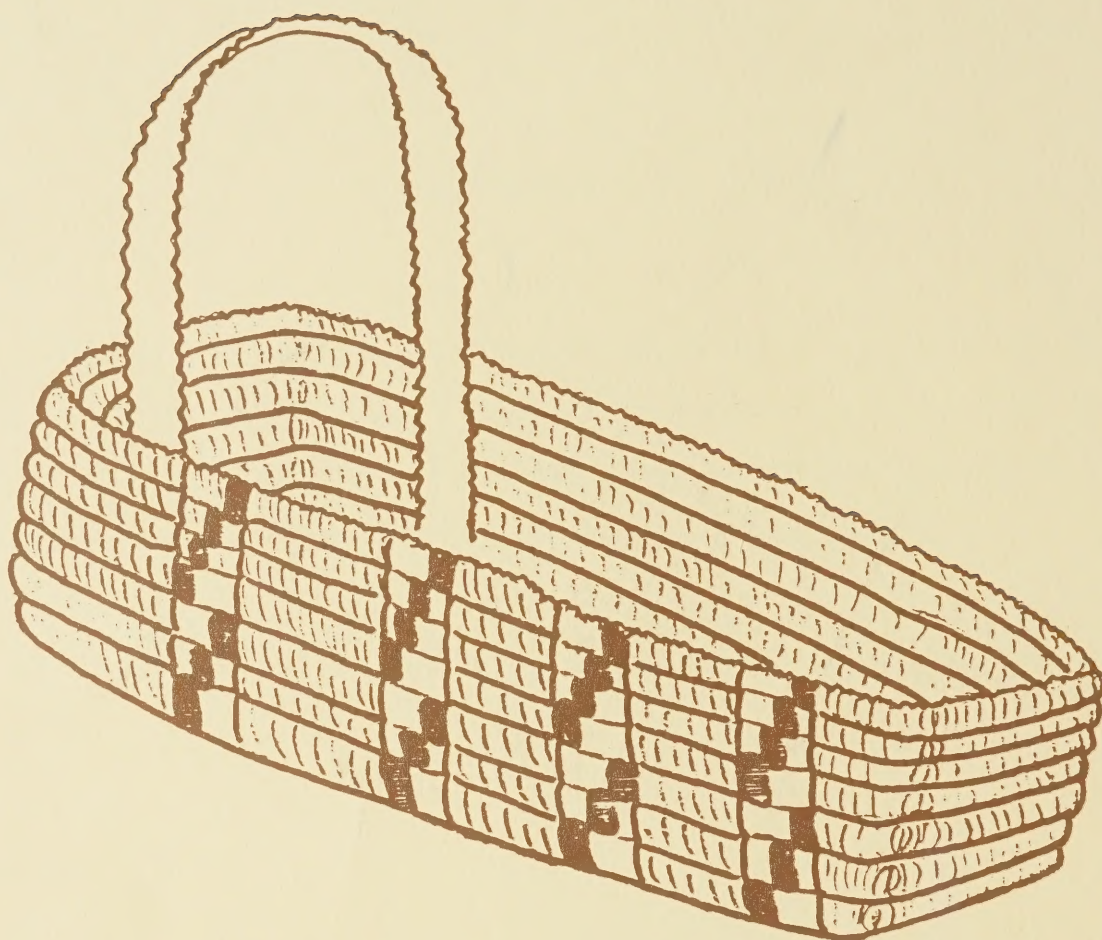
## THE TEACHING

If husband leaves wife, advise wife not to forget her kids, they need her. Find someone to trust and talk to. The children are the ones who suffer, no security of a family. She must talk and reason with them, it helps. If it stays inside of them it will bother them, make them go the wrong way, do things they shouldn't do.

You have to constantly talk to children, let them know what is right, and wrong.







# *Pathus* *cradle*

Cover Design by:  
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